

ON THE MOVE

NSP, NDOT IT partnership receives national recognition

A collaboration between the Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska Department of Transportation, Nebraska Crime Commission, and Office of the Chief Information Officer has been awarded a nation-

al honor to their effort to streamline crash reporting and data collection for law enforcement agencies across the state. The team was honored with the Cross-Boundary Collaboration and

Partnerships Award at last month's National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) conference in Louisville, Kentucky. The Nebraska entry was selected as the winner from among ten programs

from states across the country.

The effort focused on the development of a new statewide crash database. The partnership utilized the existing foundation of NSP's Traffic and Crime Software system (TraCS) to create the new crash reporting system. NSP's TraCS team onboarded 60 new law enforcement partners to the TraCS system in a four-month period, bringing the total number of partners on the TraCS platform to over 130 agencies across Nebraska.

"I'm incredibly proud of the outstanding work that our TraCS team has accomplished over the last few years," said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. "From our troopers, deputies, and officers on the front lines, all the way to our data ana-

lysts at NDOT, this tool has been invaluable and has been the ultimate collaboration."

Data collected through the TraCS crash reporting system is delivered to NDOT for research into Nebraska's roadways and how drivers are operating on roadways to evaluate improved safety features. Additionally, data collected provides information on future planning for transportation across the State.

"The safety of the citizens of Nebraska is paramount to multiple agencies and partners," said John Selmer, NDOT Director. "NDOT is proud to help advance TraCS with additional partners in the State and modernize both the collection of data, and how it is used."



Kimberly Mize (center left) and Monica Spanke (center right) from NSP's TraCS team, accept the award during the conference in Louisville, Kentucky.



Burning rubber

The second annual Burn-out competition was held in Wayne early this fall. Vehicles of all kinds took part in the event with winners being determined by audience participation. More photos from the event can be found in this edition of On The Move.

Gov. Ricketts announces EPA approval of state’s expanded E30 demonstration project

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts recently announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the continuation of groundbreaking research being done in Nebraska on E30 fuel. Results of the state’s initial pilot program, launched in 2019, showed that E30 is safe and reliable fuel for use in conventional vehicles. Under current EPA guidelines, only flex fuel vehicles (FFVs) can use ethanol blends higher than E15. Through its second phase of research, the state intends to underscore its initial findings in order to support regulatory change to make E30 accessible to all drivers.

In June 2019, the State of Nebraska began its study on the use of locally sourced E30 biofuel in conventional vehicles. State team-

mates outfitted 50 state-owned vehicles with onboard tracking systems to capture data on vehicle performance. They monitored those vehicles for an entire year. Data was submitted to engineers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) for analysis.

In 2021, UNL’s Engineering Department released its analysis of data from the first phase of the demonstration. It clearly showed that E30, a blend of gasoline and 30% ethanol, is safe and efficient to use in non-FFVs. This peer-reviewed research was the first scientific demonstration of its kind.

The second phase of the E30 demonstration will begin in the fall 2022 and include up to 825 State vehicles. While further demonstrating the safety and reliability of

E30, the State will also significantly reduce its fuel costs and carbon footprint through the program.

“Promoting higher ethanol blends should be a centerpiece of our national strategy to lower gas prices,” said Gov. Ricketts. “Ethanol saves drivers money at the pump, is better for the environment, and creates opportunities for farm families in America’s Heartland. Nebraska has already demonstrated that E30 can be used in regular vehicles without reducing performance or requiring extra maintenance. With our expanded study, we’ll be in an even stronger position to advo-

cate regulatory change to make E30 accessible to everyone.”

One of the key findings from the first phase of the E30 demonstration is the positive environmental impact of allowing statewide E30 consumption. According to the Nebraska Ethanol Board, if only 10% of the 1.7 million registered non-FFVs in Nebraska used E30 instead of E10, ethanol consumption would increase by 18.5 million gallons per year and carbon emissions would decrease by 64,000 tons per year.

“This marks another significant milestone for the nation’s ethanol industry and another significant

step in reducing gasoline’s aromatic content,” said Reid Wagner, Executive Director of the Nebraska Ethanol Board. “We have demonstrated that higher ethanol blends release fewer harmful emissions, have no detrimental impact on vehicles, and save consumers money. We hope to see other states follow Nebraska’s lead by demonstrating the use of E30 in their state fleets.”

Wagner said the state plans to work with industry partners and the EPA to continue the E30 demonstration for at least two years.

Addressing headlight glare

Headlight glare becomes dangerous when visibility is impaired to a point where the risk of accidents is heightened. Glare is a growing problem for many modern drivers due to the increased use of light emitting diodes in headlights.

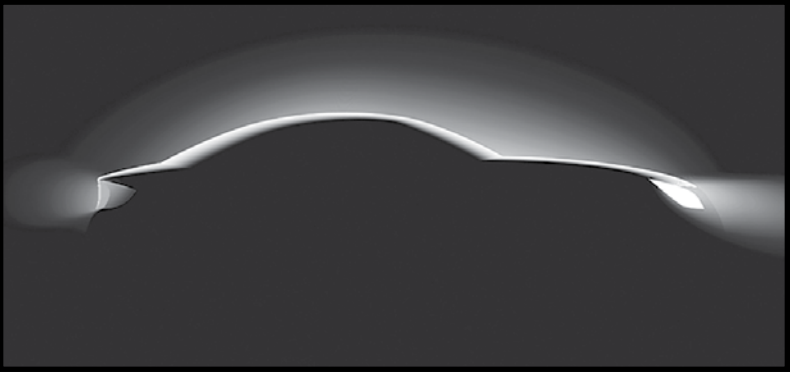
Driving at night is challenging because pedestrians, cars and other obstacles are difficult to see once the sun sets. However, a study from the U.S. Department of Transportation found that 88 percent of drivers noticed LED and HID headlight glare, with more than 30 percent saying the glare is “disturbing.” While LED lights may not actually be brighter, their “cool” spectrum make them appear so. Studies have found that blue and white light tends to hit people’s eyes harder, especially at night.

In addition, human eyes do not adjust to changes in lighting very quickly, according to Pierre Paul Driving School in New York. The older a person gets, the longer his or her eyes will take to adjust to changes in lighting. In fact, it can take up to seven seconds to recover from the blinding glare of headlights. That’s enough blindness to

swerve off the road or potentially hit something.

While glare can be problematic,

talopia. Eye shape changes, including a condition called keratoconus, can affect vision. Cataracts and dia-




drivers can take certain steps to make it safer to drive at night.

- Clean the windshield. Dirt and grime found on the windshield can refract light and make glare worse. Therefore, clean all windows and mirrors thoroughly, inside and out.
- Repair scratches and cracks. Glare can be exacerbated by any imperfections in the windshield. Repair cracks or scratches promptly.
- Get a vision and health check. Changes to vision can impact how glare affects certain individuals. Vitamin A deficiency can cause night blindness, also known as nyc-

betes also impair vision. Visit with a primary care physician as well as an eye doctor to diagnose conditions that can make night vision worse.

- Change your line of sight. Do not look directly into oncoming headlights. Rather, look slightly down and to the right side of the road so that you’re not focusing on the beams.
- Get glare-resistant coatings on eyeglasses. Speak with an optician about eyeglasses with anti-glare coating. This will significantly reduce the amount of glare. VisionCenters.com says standard plastic lenses reflect around 8 percent of the light that reaches glasses, while high-index lenses reflect up to 12 percent of available light. Anti-glare coating allows 99.5 percent of available light to reach the eyes, essentially eliminating glare. Those who don’t wear eyeglasses can purchase specific anti-glare glasses to wear in high-glare conditions, such as when looking at computer and phone screens.
- Flip the rearview mirror to “night” mode. This will make it appear as though lights coming from behind are dimmer.

These are some of the steps to take when glare becomes problematic while driving at night. Taking breaks also can help eyes recover.



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What’s behind noises your car might be making

Few things can be as unsettling when behind the wheel as a sudden noise. Noises coming from a car can indicate a host of issues, and that’s one reason why such sounds tend to be so different.

Quickly identifying what’s behind car noises can make for safer driving and potentially save drivers substantial amounts of money.

Noise: Rattling coins

Problem: Loose lug nut in a hub cap

This noise can be loud and unsettling, but the good news is that

it’s often a simple fix if addressed immediately. The automotive insurance experts at Geico note that a noise that sounds like coins rattling around in a dryer is likely a loose lug nut in a hubcap. The lug nut might have become loose if a wheel was not tightened sufficiently after a recent maintenance appointment or even if drivers changed a tire on their own. The longer drivers wait to address this, the more dangerous and costly it could become, as it could have an effect on the wheel bearings. If addressed promptly,

the damage is likely minimal.

Noise: Squealing on start-up

Problem: Issue with the serpentine belt

A squealing noise at start-up is among the more annoying noises a driver can hear. This sound is often indicative of a worn or damaged serpentine belt, which connects the crankshaft to the alternator, power steering and additional components. Thankfully, a worn down serpentine belt is a relatively inexpensive repair, though it’s important that it be addressed promptly.



What to know when buying from a private seller

In recent years, more and more car buyers are considering pre-owned vehicles as the world continues to confront supply shortages related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Certified pre-owned dealerships may be the first place used car buyers go when looking to replace their current vehicles, but they might be able to find even better deals

hesitate to request a vehicle history report as well as all documentation of maintenance that has been performed on the car since sellers have owned it. Consider it a red flag if sellers do not have any paperwork or refuse to provide it.

- Be patient. Patience is a buyer’s ally when shopping for a pre-owned vehicle. Certified pre-

don’t rush to buy cars that could ultimately prove to be lemons if they’re not vetted properly.

- Insist that a mechanic be allowed to examine the car. One of the biggest risks of buying from private sellers is that such vehicles are rarely under warranty when put up for sale, and sellers likely won’t guarantee parts. That underscores the importance of having a vehicle thoroughly examined by a certified mechanic before buying it. Private sellers should have no issue allowing this, especially when buyers pay for the inspections. If sellers are unwilling to let mechanics inspect the car, look elsewhere for your next car or truck.
- Confirm the number of owners. There’s no magic number of owners a vehicle can have before it’s considered too risky to buy, but the more owners a car has had, the less likely buyers will learn its full history. In addition, if sellers were not the first owners, they won’t know how the car was treated or driven prior to them buying it. That’s another potential red flag to consider before buying a car that has had more than one owner.

The private seller market can be a great place to find a reliable pre-owned vehicle. But caution and patience is of the utmost importance when buying vehicles from private sellers.

Squealing at start-up also could indicate a loose tensioner, which is designed to keep the serpentine belt at a certain tightness and tension, or wear and tear to the belt due to parking outside. These issues can be addressed by readjusting or replacing the tensioner or replacing the serpentine belt, particularly if the part is old.

Noise: Engine knocking

Problem: Various issues

A knocking noise from the engine typically sounds like repeated tapping. The noise will often become louder as the vehicle accelerates.

Various issues can be behind the knocking sound, and drivers should avoid self-diagnosing the problem, even if they’ve experienced it in the past with the same or a different vehicle.

Some drivers hear knocking

because they’re using 87 octane fuel instead the of the high-performance and more expensive fuel the owner’s manual recommends (this could be a common problem in recent months given the meteoric rise in fuel prices).

Another potential cause of engine knock could be problems with the pistons or crankshaft. Regardless of what’s causing engine knocking, drivers are urged to take their vehicle to a mechanic promptly, as the cost of repairs is likely to rise the longer knocking goes untreated.

No one wants to hear noises coming from their vehicles. However, such noises should be addressed promptly, as the quickness of drivers’ responses could make the difference between a simple, less costly fix and a more time-consuming, expensive repair.



if they look at the private seller market.

Buying vehicles from private sellers was once relatively common but has fallen out of favor over the last few decades. In fact, the insurance comparison site The Zebra reports that roughly 61 percent of car buyers prefer to buy from a dealership. But that doesn’t mean buyers can’t still find great cars on the private seller market, especially if they keep a few strategies in mind as they begin their vehicle search.

- Get as much paperwork as possible. Many vehicle owners prioritize record-keeping, saving maintenance receipts for everything from standard oil changes to more significant repairs. When buying from private sellers, buyers should not

owned vehicles at a local dealership have already been vetted and met certain standards to earn that designation, but buyers must do their own vetting when buying from private sellers. That requires patience as buyers peruse vehicle history reports provided by the seller (or gather them on their own) and

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The effects of infrequent driving on vehicle performance explained

Driving puts a certain measure of wear and tear on a vehicle. Whether a vehicle is used primarily for commuting or as a vessel to take travelers to parts unknown, wear and tear is inevitable.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, individuals may not realize



that failing to drive their vehicles regularly also can affect performance. Here's a closer look at what can happen when vehicles sit idle for lengthy periods of time.

- Battery loses its charge. The battery in a vehicle is still being used even if the car isn't running. Batteries power various compo-

nents in a car, such as the vehicle computer, phone chargers and more. If the engine does not turn over and help to recharge the battery, the battery will eventually die. People who drive infrequently may want to consider a trickle charger that's plugged in during periods of

modern vehicles. A vehicle that has been exposed to salt or rain or one that is stored in a moist climate can be susceptible to undercarriage or engine rust. This may cause damage that's not easily repaired.

- Damage from sap or droppings. A vehicle parked in one location for a long time could be a target for bird droppings, fallen berries, sap, and other substances that are potentially harmful to the paint job. Leaving the car or truck out in the sun also means UV rays can cause clear coat over the paint to

oxidize and begin to fail, which can produce blotchy or peeling spots.

- Poor brake performance. When vehicles are left to sit, corrosion could build up on the rotors and the brake pads may become less flexible. Moisture also may seep into brake lines, causing issues with pressurization of brake fluid. Each of these factors adds up to brakes that do not work properly — which is a big safety hazard.
- Formation of tire flat spots. When tires are not used frequently, the weight of the car can continu-

ally put pressure on the same parts of the tires, leading to flat spots. Tires also can lose pressure if they sit too long.

- Oil and other fluids may lose efficacy. Various fluids can go stale in a vehicle if it isn't regularly driven. Gasoline also may develop condensation, which can reduce efficiency and performance. Taking short trips helps avoid this issue.

Infrequent driving can cause damage to a car or truck. But many potential issues can be avoided by driving vehicles more often.

International Snowmobile Safety Week to be observed

The snowmobile community will sponsor the 28th annual International Snowmobile Safety Week, starting January 21, 2023.

This is a special event for the snowmobile community, including State and Provincial Snowmobile Associations, Visitors and Convention Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Snowmobile Clubs and local and state and provincial agencies joining together to recognize the importance of safe, responsible snowmobiling.

Many groups highlight safety week by holding various snowmobile safety training programs. All of the efforts highlight the key position statements highlighted by the safety week efforts. Those key points include:

Snowmobiling and alcohol don't mix - Don't drink and ride.

Smart Riders are Safe Riders – Take a snowmobile safety training course.

When night riding slow down – Expect the unexpected.

Know before you go – Always check local ice conditions.

Cross with Care.

Know the risks and be prepared – Make every trip a round trip.

One is the loneliest number – Never ride alone.

Ride safe, stay on the trail –

Respect private property.

Avalanche Awareness:

When snowmobiling in Avalanche terrain, always check the existing conditions. You can do so by visiting one of the two websites:

United States: www.avalanche.org

Canada: www.avalanche.ca

The five guidelines for mountain terrain riding:

Get the Gear: Ensure everyone has an avalanche transceiver, shovel, and probe on their person and knows how to use them.

Get the Training: Take an avalanche course.

Get the Forecast: Make a riding plan based on the current avalanche and weather forecast.

Get the Picture: If you see recent avalanche activity unstable snow exists. Riding on or underneath steep slopes can be dangerous.

Get out of Harm's Way: One at a time on all avalanche slopes. Don't go to help your stuck friend. Don't group up in runout zones.

This year we are continuing our effort that all snowmobilers must respect private landowners and public land and the land managers. We highlight the need to protect land use privileges and to stay on the trail and if you don't know

– don't go. Remember to Take the Pledge at www.snowmobiler-spledge.com.

Snowmobile Clubs and Associations / Federations are encouraged to invite local representatives from the business community to go snowmobiling and show them our known, safe riding standards.

There is information available from the ISMA Office to help support your efforts. That information includes the Safe Rider video chapter series, with 13 videos, located on the www.snowmobile.org and www.gosnowmobiling.org websites. All of the videos are free and can be downloaded and used at local events. There is a Safety Week Manual available to download, from www.snowmobile.org, with ideas on how to set up a Safety Week event and get the International Snowmobile Safety Week recognized in your community.

During your campaign activities, we encourage you to take photos and share them with others on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/GoSnowmobiling.

Snowmobiling is a fun family activity where we must keep safety as a top of mind awareness issue.

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Did you know?

Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicates that motorcycle helmets are 67 percent effective in preventing brain injuries in motorcycle accidents and 37 percent effective in preventing deaths.

Despite that, many states do not mandate that all riders wear helmets when riding their motorcycles. The Insurance Information Institute reports that only 17 states and the District of Columbia require all riders to wear helmets when riding their motorcycles. As of March 2022, Illinois and New Hampshire were the only two states that had no law governing motorcycle helmet usage.

Many states require riders 17 and younger to wear helmets whenever they're riding their motorcycles. Laws are somewhat more uniform in Canada, where all motorcycle riders, including passengers, are required to wear helmets at all times. However, each province and territory in Canada is free to specify the standards a helmet must meet to comply with the law.

Anyone planning to travel through Canada and/or the United States on a motorcycle should consult the laws in areas they plan to visit to ensure they're in compliance with local laws at all times.



Advice shared for buying an RV

A recreational vehicle, also known as an RV or a camper, can be a worthwhile investment for people who want to travel at their leisure. RVs offer the benefit of traversing the open road without having to sacrifice the comforts of home.

The RV market has been hot over the last couple of years as people have looked to RVing as a safe way to travel. According to the RV Industry Association, shipments of travel trailers and motorhomes were expected to hit their highest level on record in 2021, with more than 533,000 units sold by year-end.

Sizable purchases are seldom easy, and purchasing an RV is no exception. In addition to choosing the right vehicle, RV owners must learn maintenance, how to drive a large vehicle, towing, and campsite etiquette. Buying an RV is a long-term investment. These pointers can help the purchase go smoothly.

New or used?

Purchasing a used RV can help people save money. However, upgrades and repairs may be costly. New RVs have the latest technology and no risk of prior wear and tear. Insurance premiums will be higher for a new vehicle, and a new pur-

chase can be expensive depending on the features chosen.

Figure out features and size

Take a hard look at what you are seeking in a camper. Do you want something that is just an alternative to tent camping? Are you interested in an RV that can sleep a crowd? Do you have a tow hitch and a vehicle capable of towing an RV? These questions and more will determine the style and size of the RV that's right for you. Class A RVs are large, bus-shaped rigs between 20 and 45 feet in length. Class B are sleeper vans and are smaller than Class A. Class C rigs offer size



Dino competition

A Dino competition, to determine the horsepower of a vehicle, was held prior to the second annual Burnout competition in September. Winners were determined in both gas and diesel categories with prize money provided by a number of sponsors. Entries ranged from antique cars (above) to nearly new pickup trucks (below).



but driveability and are built into a regular truck chassis. For trailer-style RVs, the options are foldable trailers, travel trailers, toy haulers, and fifth wheel trailers. They vary in size and features; but you'll need a truck to tow them.

Usage frequency

When considering an RV, think about how often it will be used and where it will be stored when not in use. Garage storage may be challenging on a larger rig, and some housing communities frown upon parking RVs in driveways. This may affect the size you choose as well as

the features you need, according to KOA, the RV camp site leader.

Secure financing

As with other vehicles, shop around for the best rates on financing; you don't necessarily need to go with the dealer. Also, when buying a trade-in or used rig, hire a third-party inspector to go over systems to ensure they're in working order.

These are just a few things to consider when looking to purchase an RV. Buyers should do their homework to get a vacation vehicle that fits their needs and budgets.



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History of International Snowmobile Safety and Awareness Week shared

Sledding has been a popular recreational activity for many centuries. However, the motorized sled was invented in 1927 by a mechanic in Valcourt Quebec named Joseph-Armand Bombardier. Bombardier made the first-ever motorized sled by using a propeller. A few years later in 1927, the motor toboggan was made. Bombardier used the wheel and track system to further improve his invention, and thus in 1935, the first snowmobile was made.

In the coming years, Bombardier would make modifications to the snowmobile, which became immensely popular. He patented the first seven-member snowmobile in 1937 and the 12-member capacity one in 1941. Bombardier’s snowmobiles turned out to be extremely useful for people, especially people working in the law enforcement, fire service, hospital emergency services, etc. Some of these vehicles were modified for military use and used by the American troops in World War II.

By the 1960s, new snowmobiles with powerful engines emerged. It was popular among people around the world who lived in frigid regions where there was heavy snowfall. People enjoyed snowmobiles as a

recreational activity and as a winter sport. It was also useful for going from place to place during the times heavy snowfall would block the roads.

Many incidents of accidents and mishaps involving snowmobiles were reported. Many were also concerned about fuel usage and its impact on the environment. In 1993, International Snowmobile Safety and Awareness Week was created to encourage people to use necessary safety equipment like helmets and protective gear and to use snowmobiles made by authorized companies that produce snowmobiles that undergo strict pollution checks.

Facts About Snowmobiles

1. It is a \$22 million business
- In the United States alone, snowmobiling is a \$22 million business.
2. Marked trails exist
- There are about 230,000 miles of marked snowmobiling tracks in the United States.
3. It is also called Ski-Doo
- Snowmobiles are also called Ski-Doods.
4. The snowmobiling world record
- The greatest distance traveled in a snowmobile is 2,081 miles.



Cars-N-Carroll

Hundreds of vehicles, including cars, trucks, tractors and kids' vehicles were part of the annual Cars-N-Carroll Show & Shine. Trophies were awarded in a number of categories and door prizes were provided by local businesses and individuals. In addition, entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon by Dave Merkel One Man Band, Highway Thirty Three and Magician Joe Cole.



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15 holiday travel tips for a less stressful festival season

By Stacey Leasca

See that twinkle on your neighbor’s roof? Can you hear the soft sound of sleigh bells ringing in the distance and smell the distinct scent of pine wafting through the air? Yes, dear reader, the holidays are almost here, which means it’s also time for you to plan out all your holiday travels.

Traveling during the holidays can most certainly bring plenty of joy. After all, it usually means you’re off to see your loved ones or heading to the vacation destination of your dreams to end the year right. But so are millions of other people, which can make for a rather stressful travel experience in airports, train stations, and on the road. But fear not — we’re here to help. Here are 15 holiday travel tips that will make for a more joyful season.

Set price alerts and book flights early.

If you’re planning to fly for the holiday season, you better get a move on because ticket prices are likely only going up from here. As Travel + Leisure previously reported, the typical prime time to book flights for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays is usually in September. However, we aren’t really living in typical times now, are we? That said, it’s still a good idea to book ASAP. And if for some reason you’re still not convinced that now is the time to buy, try setting up price alerts on sites like Skyscanner, then click “buy” when the price is right for you.

Don’t forget to book your rental car ahead of time.

Car rental prices are only going up, too. Cars are a finite resource, and everyone wants one during the holidays. In fact, in September 2021, Kayak noted that holiday car rental searches were up 243% compared to 2020, so you can only imagine that people are already searching (and booking) for Thanksgiving and Christmas right this second. Make sure to grab your necessary vehicle before it’s gone.

Be flexible on dates (and airports).

Remaining a little fluid with your holiday plans can really pay off. Having the ability to leave for your trip a day or two earlier and return a day early or late could help you save big on airfare as you have a little more flexibility on picking a less crowded day to fly. One more way to keep costs down when flying? Picking a smaller airport nearby rather than a main hub. For example, you could try flying into Long Beach Airport or Van Nuys rather than Los Angeles International Airport. Smaller air-

ports tend to have less demand, thus lower prices.

Consider less-visited destinations.

If you’re visiting family or friends, you can’t change where they live,

them now to feel less of a pinch this year on your holiday travel spending.

Try to book direct flights.

We’re heading into winter, which



so ignore this tip. However, if you’re thinking of setting off on vacation, try broadening your horizons. Looking for some fun in the sun over the holidays? Rather than going to notoriously popular destinations like Cabo, try heading out of town for slightly fewer crowds and potentially more affordable options. For example, you could head to the equally alluring Todos Santos, just an hour away from Cabo. There, you’ll find a slower pace in a town with more Bohemian flair, and plenty of vacation rental options for you and your crew to keep costs down, including this gorgeous two-bedroom home with a private pool for just \$181 a night. The same goes for winter ski destinations. Forgo the big ski mountains for smaller spots that may not come with all the bells and whistles but still have all the powder stashes you’re truly after.

Book with points.

The holidays are the ideal time to use those points you’ve been racking up all year long on your credit card. And we know you’ve likely got points waiting because, as a rather shocking Lending Tree study showed, a whopping 70% of U.S. rewards credit card holders have unused rewards in the form of either cash back, points, or miles. You’ve earned those points. Use

means we’re also heading into an unpredictable season that could come with snowstorms and delays. Try to always book direct flights to lessen your chances of missing a connection along the way. And if you’re in close enough proximity to your destination, forgo planes altogether and opt for a train or bus instead.

Splurge on lounge access.

As we’ve mentioned several times here already, airports can be one of the most stress-inducing places. You should get to the airport at least two hours in advance of your flight, but know that you may have extra time to wait around. Rather than trying to find a seat in the crowd, use this as your excuse to splurge on lounge access. Lounge access usually comes included in first-class flights. However, those in economy can upgrade to purchase lounge access, or they can check their credit card to see if lounge access comes as an included perk. Better yet, try Priority Pass, a yearly service that can help you get access to some of the best airport lounges.

If you can, only pack carry-on luggage.

Losing a checked bag, to put it bluntly, sucks. Now, imagine losing a checked bag that’s filled with all the gifts you so diligently purchased for your nieces, nephews,

aunts, grandparents, and more. If you can live without a few items, it’s a good idea to only pack a carry-on to reduce your chances of losing anything along the way. Plus, you’ll be able to leave the airport faster because you won’t have to wait forever at the baggage carousel.

Be cautious with your gift wrapping.

If you’re traveling with gifts, leave them unwrapped. If for some reason your wrapped gift raises any red flags with the TSA, they will be forced to unwrap it at security, undoing all your hard work. You could also avoid this hassle altogether by shipping your gifts ahead of time instead.

Have a backup plan in case things go wrong.

It’s Murphy’s Law. Everything that can go wrong, will. That’s why it’s a good idea to have backups on backups for your holiday planning. This starts with opting in for travel insurance. Travel insurance can be purchased through airlines, or can be purchased via various providers. Check out all the options — including “cancel for any reason” policies and standard options that cover everything from canceled flights to lost baggage — and find the one that fits your needs. Also, check with your credit card provider to see if it’s already included in your purchase. Next, try to create an alternate route to your destination. Flight canceled? See how far the drive is, check bus and train routes, or have an entirely different plan B option for your holiday celebration (like a staycation), so you don’t feel like you’re missing out.

If you’re driving, make sure to get a tune-up.

Driving in the winter can be just as tough as flying. Not only do you have to think about the various weather patterns, but you also have to contend with millions of others making the drive too. And the last thing you need is your vehicle breaking down at an inop-

portunity time. Make sure to get a quick tune-up before hitting the road, and try to avoid these 10 other road trip mistakes along the way.

Make use of all the apps.

You know what’s great about living in the 21st century? All. The. Apps. This holiday season, make use of every app in your phone’s arsenal — from your airline’s app to your favorite streaming platforms (Netflix, Hulu, HBO, etc.), along with map apps to keep you on track. Download movies, add your flight info to your phone’s wallet, and keep directions handy so you’re prepared for everything and stay entertained even on long-haul flights.

Check the opening hours at your destination’s attractions.


You’re not the only one on holiday break. So too are hospital-ity and attraction workers. Before heading off to your must-see destinations, take note of holiday hours. Often businesses will have condensed hours or closed days to ensure their staff gets time with their families too.

And make reservations at all the restaurants you plan to visit.

We’ve said it before and will say it again: You have to plan ahead for the holiday season. That applies to restaurants too. Have a spot you’re dying to try? Make reservations for the holiday season as soon as they open so you have a guaranteed place to eat.

Be ready to tackle stress and spread joy instead.

Hopefully, all that preparation will help keep you calm this holiday season. If you need a little help relaxing, try downloading a few meditation apps to use during your journey. This way, you can breathe through any stress and anxiety and focus on staying positive for yourself, your family, and all your fellow travelers just trying to get to their destinations.



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Advice offered for flying with children

The safest place for your child under the age of two on a U.S. airplane is in approved child restraint system (CRS) or device, not on your lap. Your arms aren't capable of holding your in-lap child securely, especially during unexpected turbulence, which is the number one cause of pediatric injuries on an airplane.

The FAA strongly urges you to secure your child in an approved CRS or other approved device for the entirety of your flight. Buying a ticket for your child is the only way to guarantee that you will be able to use a CRS. It's the smart and right thing to do so that everyone in your family arrives safely at your destination.

A CRS is a hard-backed child safety seat that is approved by the government for use in both motor vehicles and aircraft. FAA controls the approval of some but not all CRS. Additional information is available in FAA guidance and on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website.

Not all car seats are approved for use in airplanes. Make sure your

CRS is approved by the U.S. government and has "This restraint is certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft" printed on it or is approved by a foreign government and bears



the required label or marking.

Read the user's manual to confirm that your CRS can be secured properly in an airplane seat. Otherwise, you may be asked to check the CRS as baggage.

Installing a CRS on an Airplane

A CRS must be installed in a for-

ward-facing aircraft seat, according to manufacturer's instructions. This includes placing the CRS in the appropriate forward-facing or aft-facing direction as indicated on the device label for the size of the child.

The FAA prohibits passengers from using booster seats or backless CRS during ground movement, take-off and landing.

FAA-Approved Child Aviation Restraint System (CARES)

The Child Aviation Restraint System ("CARES", manufactured by AmSafe®, is FAA-certified for children who are up to 40 inches tall and who weigh between 22 and 44 pounds. The device is for those who are capable of sitting upright alone in a forward-facing position and who occupy their own seat. This supplemental restraint is used with the existing aircraft seatbelt for improved child safety. CARES is lightweight and adjusts to fit virtually all economy-, business-, and first-class airline seats. This type of device provides an alternative to using a hard-backed CRS. CARES is approved for use during all phases of flight—movement on the surface

(taxi), take-off, landing, and turbulence, and is approved only for use on aircraft, but not for use in motor vehicles. If you're using a CARES device, make sure it has "FAA Approved in Accordance with 14 CFR 21.8(d), Approved for Aircraft Use Only" or "FAA Approved in Accordance with 14 CFR 21.305(d), Amd 21.50 6-9-1980, Approved for Aircraft Use Only" on it.

Tips for Parents

Make sure your CRS or device is approved for use on airplanes.

Measure the width of your CRS. It should fit in most airplane seats if it is no wider than 16 inches.

Ask your airline for a discounted fare. Buying a ticket for your child is the only way to guarantee that you will be able to use a CRS.

Reserve adjoining seats. A CRS must not block the escape path in an emergency. Many airlines have policies that require a CRS to be placed in a window seat. Do not place a CRS in an exit row.

Arrange for your airline to help you if you need help making a connecting flight. Carrying a CRS, a child, and luggage through a busy

airport can be challenging.

Pack a bag of toys and snacks to keep your child occupied during the flight.

Always use a CRS when driving to and from the airport.

Wear your seat belt at all times.

A CRS must be installed in a forward-facing aircraft seat, in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. This includes placing the CRS in the appropriate forward- or aft-facing direction as indicated on the label for the size of the child.

Lap Children

Although children who have not reached their second birthday are permitted to travel as lap children, the FAA strongly discourages this practice and recommends that you secure your child in an approved CRS in their own seat for the entire flight. While there is no regulatory prohibition from using a booster seat or harness vest (or other non-approved devices) for a lap child during the cruise portion of the flight only, airlines have policies which may or may not allow the use of those devices. Check with your airline.



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